

# D&D Fiction

## Oroon Rising, Part 14

*by Ed Greenwood*



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### Chapter 14: An Unpleasant Storm of Spells

The passage ahead of her ended in a gaping hole, where the room it had once led to was missing. Jallana hurtled toward the sunlit sky beyond.

The end of the hallway promptly exploded in her face.

Angry emerald flames, the shattered ceiling whirling past her as it started to break apart and fall... Jallana slammed shoulder-first into unyielding stone with teeth-loosening force, and then tumbled back down the passage limp and helpless, one of her swords clanging away from her.

The gasp of pain was her own, but she knew Darrance Oroon felt it, and felt a tiny measure of satisfaction at that.

The emerald fire didn't fade but hung in the air, seething and whirling and spitting out long streamers of reaching flame. The way out was blocked.

Or was it?

Droon was already sending her bruised and gasping body swooping down to retrieve her fallen blade, and then soaring up, up to the newly-gaping rents in the ceiling. They opened into darkness, not sunlight, but that room above might well have doors or shuttered windows that could be forced open—

She soared up into it, and had just long enough to hear and recognize an all-too-familiar whistling before arrows were thudding into her.

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“Ransssssur!” Kadreth hissed, his fury spitting worms onto the table. “Ransur and Damryn and Thornan and Halorn! Where did they come from? Who else dares to raise our meat?”

The lich on the far side of the table stood very still.

Kadreth Whitecloak whirled toward Brethniir, setting several scrying-spheres spinning in his rage—and then saw, and realized, and froze.



“Lord of the Brazen Tower,” he whispered, “we agreed on this. You spoke of trust between us. This is trustworthy?”

Brethniir’s skull turned to regard the seething Worm That Walks, and said, “We agreed not to raise Ransur and the others for the attack on the Bowl-Idol, and I did not. I should not have worked these raisings without telling you, yes; yet I knew it was necessary, and we lacked time for dispute between us, so I -”

“Prepared your own private force, to wrest whatever our prize Proud Slayers found away from what was left of them, for you rather than us!”

“Kadreth, do you truly believe I had any such intention?” The lich’s deep, hollow voice sounded somehow sad. “How could they do so without you being aware of it, and hurling spells at me right then? I but prepared a second strike - and lo, we find ourselves in need of it!”

Kadreth turned abruptly away and adjusted his mask, the hands of writhing worms that held it trembling violently. “We’ll speak more of this later,” he hissed, taking a step toward the nearest scrying-sphere.



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Burning, biting deep through her battered armor... pain!

Fury burned in her head, too, as Darrance Oroon raged, his chill ebbing in her mind, delivering Jallana into the full searing of her hurts.

She was sagging in the air, flying blind, bristling with a handcount of arrows, two of them deep-set. Jallana whimpered, trying to breathe, feeling wet and rent and afire inside.

Sudden heavy blows came cleaving into her, each a dullness with slicing steel at its heart, shrieking sparks from her armor as more of it fell away. Swords were hacking her, chopping at her like a butcher quartering a hog... her right arm flopping limp and useless as a vicious cut spun her away down the room.

“Cut her apart!” someone hissed, a voice she knew. Ransur.

“I - ”

“Damur, see this knife?” Ransur’s voice was silken-soft.

“Uh, ah, aye, chop her—wind-swift I am, Rann! See it done, see it done!”

Jallan tumbled, hearing the thunder of Damryn’s heavy boots charging nearer. Darrance Oroon was fighting to make her speak, spitting out her blood to do so, choking in her - his - haste, but it was all fading, all seeming so far away...

She was drifting along so low to the floor that the fingertips of her dangling arm trailed along the ancient cracked

stones.

Then Darrance's fury and turmoil burst into a flaring flame of triumph that warmed Jallana. She realized the echoing flood of words from her lips had abruptly ceased, to the accompaniment of an intricate gesture sketched in the air by her good hand.

Dimly she was aware of a sudden crackling, a hushed heaviness that seemed to slow to drifting idleness the hurried movements of the warrior Damryn. He loomed up over her, his well-used broadsword sweeping—slowly, so slowly—up on high, nicked and notched edge gleaming, to slice down at her.

Then in a thunder so abrupt that it forestalled his strike and made them both wince, whatever spell the Oroon had cast through Jallana burst out of her in a great crashing wave of steel-hard, stabbing-spined air, an invisible lacerating and flailing force that swept Damryn away, broken-limbed and screaming, in its race to reach the others.

Ransur threw a futile knife, then another—and then turned and ran, leaping and racing in frantic haste to get away from the magic that had now left Damryn and the close-mouthed, massively-armored Thornan bloodily diced, and was reaching for the shouting, vainly-running Halorn.

The tall, haughty priest almost clung to his life.

Almost.

He was still two hard-running strides short of safety when the Oroon's ebbing spell reached and clawed its weakening way over him, fading but still strong enough to lay his back bare down to the bones, shredding vestments and flesh.

Halorn fell dead on his face without another word, leaving Ransur alone still alive, half a panting, whirling way up a crumbling stone stair.

The spell reaching for him faded, and he turned, gasping for breath, to see it dwindle.

Jallana sank to the floor, two of the arrows she was wearing scraping fresh agony along the stones.

A slow sneer rose on Ransur's face, and built into a smile worthy of any wolf.

"Well, now, Jallana So Strong," he purred. "Who's the mightier of us two at the last, hey?"

And he drew a gleaming-sharp knife from his boot, balanced it mockingly on a fingertip—and then threw it at her, hard and fast.

His aim, as always, was dead true.

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